

HOUSE BILL NO. 27

INTRODUCED BY M. FUNK

BY REQUEST OF THE EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT AUTHORIZING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO PARTNER WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND EMERGENCY SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS TO CREATE A DISTRICT "HANDLE WITH CARE" PROGRAM; REQUIRING DISTRICTS TO DESIGNATE A CONTACT PERSON; SPECIFYING THE LIMITED INFORMATION THAT MAY BE SHARED THROUGH THE PROGRAM; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Handle with care programs authorized. (1) The board of trustees of a

school district may authorize the creation of a handle with care program on behalf of the pupils in the district. To implement the program, the trustees shall enter into an agreement to partner with one or more of the following:

- (a) a law enforcement agency as defined in 45-8-108;
- (b) an emergency services organization as defined in 50-16-701.

(2) The trustees shall notify the appropriate interdisciplinary child information and school safety team provided for in 52-2-211 that the school district has implemented a handle with care program.

(3) As part of the agreement with partner organizations, the trustees shall designate a contact person at the school district to be the recipient of a handle with care message from a law enforcement agency or emergency services organization. If the designated contact person is someone other than the superintendent or principal, the agreement must specify that there is a chain of communication from the designated contact person to the appropriate superintendent or principal to the appropriate teacher of the pupil who is involved.

(4) If an employee of a law enforcement agency or emergency services organization responds to an event where a pupil is present, the employee may contact the designated contact person at the school district to inform the district that the pupil was present at the scene of a potentially traumatic event. The employee:

- (a) shall release only the pupil's name and a statement of "handle with care" to the designated school

1 district contact person;

2 (b) may not provide any further information about the event or the pupil; and

3 (c) shall promptly contact the designated contact person. Whenever possible, the employee shall
4 provide the handle with care message before the start of the next school day.

5 (5) When a school district implements a handle with care program, the trustees shall implement
6 guidelines for the employees of the district regarding the procedure by which a handle with care message is
7 forwarded to a pupil's teacher.

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9 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
10 integral part of Title 20, chapter 7, part 13, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 7, part 13, apply to [section 1].

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12 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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